

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15 line 14 with the following amended paragraph:

A sixth optional step of a method in accordance with the present invention may comprise coupling a guard member to either of the pocket or an outer surface of the equipment or bag to which it is attached proximate a pocket opening to further safeguard the pocket contents 86. A seventh optional step of the present method may comprise providing at least one aperture in the pocket 2 for the purposes of cleaning, ventilation, and/or drainage 88.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12 line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring now to Figure 4, a pocket closure device in accordance with the present invention may be implemented in connection with a bag 50 having a top end 51, a bottom end 52, an outer surface 53, and a housing 56. A bag 50 may further comprise a shoulder transport assembly 58 to facilitate manual transport of the bag 50. In certain embodiments, the pocket 2 is preferably located proximate a bottom end 52 of the bag 50. Where the pocket 2 is so located, biasing means 14 may be attached to a front panel 6 of the pocket 2 and to an outer surface 53 of the bottom end 52 of the bag 50 substantially beyond the location of the pocket 2. In this manner, the biasing means 14 may seal a pocket opening 4 quickly and effectively without requiring a traditional locking device as the biasing means 14 require deliberate application of force to open the pocket 2.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6 line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 3B illustrates a front perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a pocket and pocket closure device in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention in a second ~~closed~~ open position;